

## PART II Population

### Where Washington's People Live

Because of the influences of topography, climate, accessibility and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains, Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamette-Puget Sound lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountain slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains, and the Selkirks have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population is concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permits a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

### Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805, but no settlements occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by America and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan, and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present state of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capital in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington, and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capital at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at this time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,141,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe who took up lumbering, fishing, mining and agriculture. Ranked numerically according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000) and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.

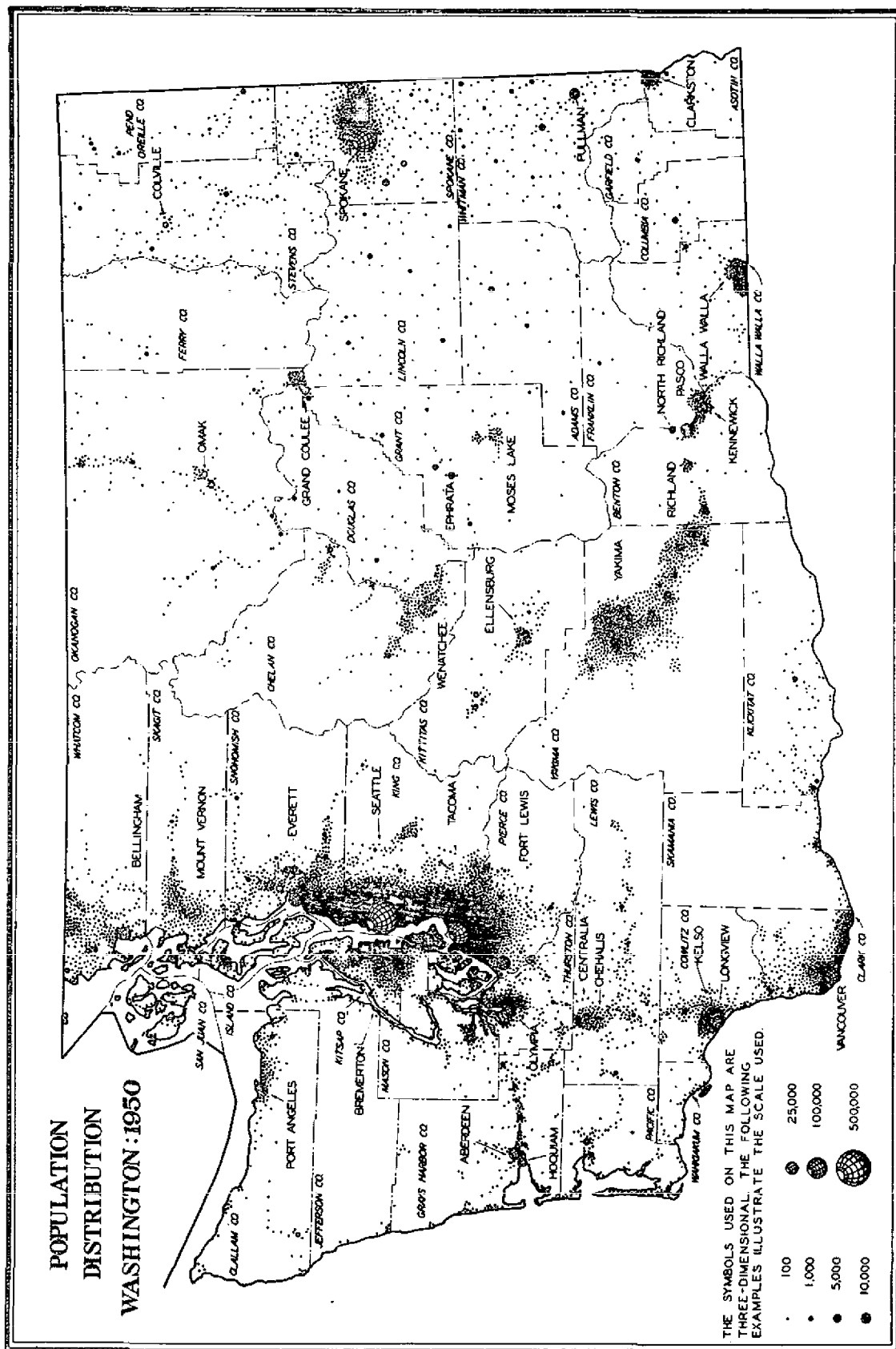
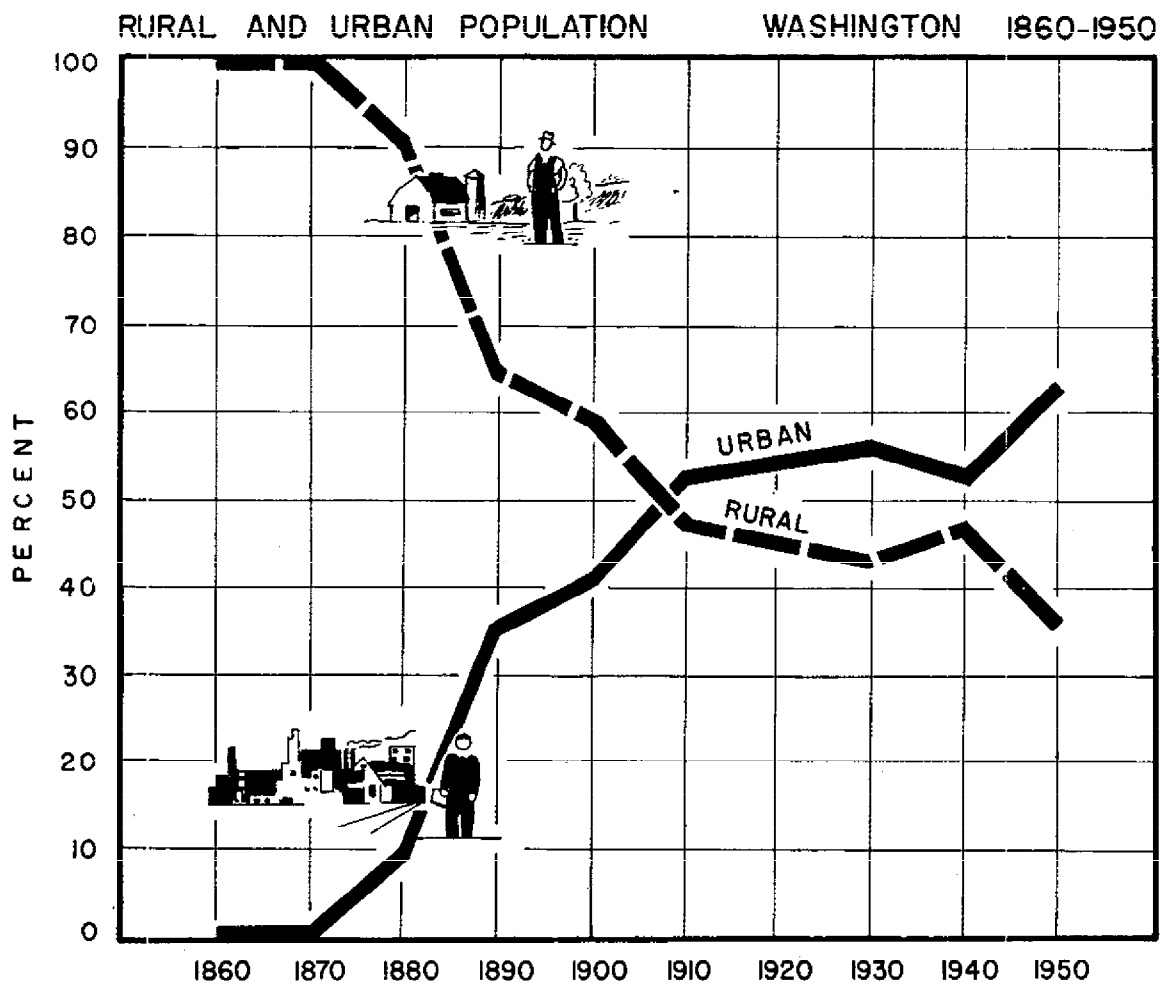
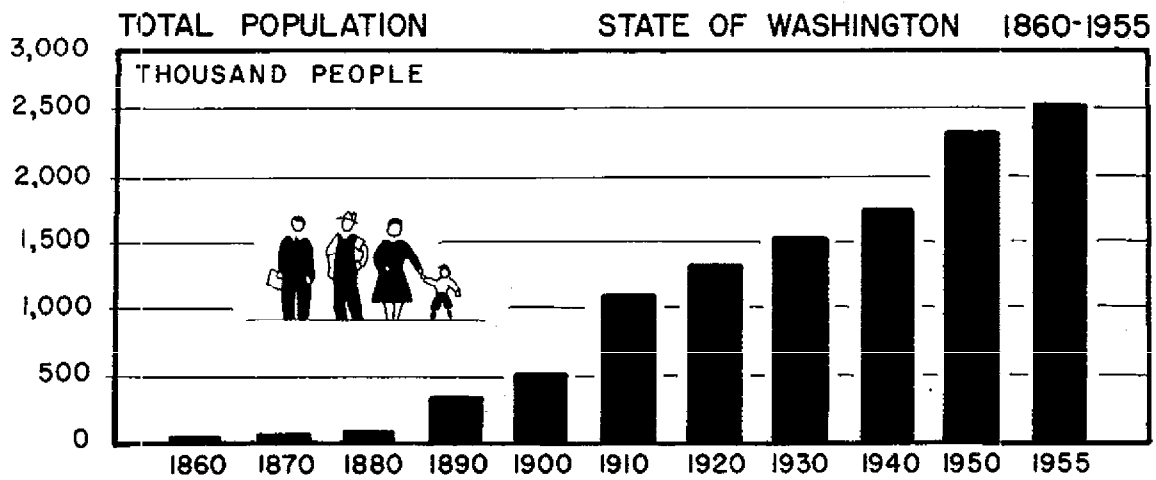


Figure 6.- DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN WASHINGTON, 1950 (Map by courtesy of Population Research Office, Washington State Census Board).



SOURCES OF DATA: U.S. Census 1860-1950; Washington State Census Board, Estimate - 1955.

The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

### Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas--in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lived in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 1.- Population of Washington  
1860-1955

Year	Population
1860	11,594
1870	23,955
1880	75,116
1890	357,232
1900	518,103
1910	1,141,990
1920	1,356,621
1930	1,563,396
1940	1,736,191
1950	2,378,963
1955	2,580,000

Sources: U.S. Census, Population;  
Washington State Census  
Board, April 1, 1955  
Estimate.

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (32,200), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

### Population of Kitsap County

In 1955 Kitsap County ranked seventh among Washington counties with an estimated population of 84,700. Population has grown steadily since the 1860 Census with the exception of a downward trend in the 1930's. In the 1940's Kitsap was one of the most rapidly growing counties of the state.

Because of the large concentration of Navy Yard employment at Bremerton, over two-fifths of the population is urban. In 1955 an estimated 34,800 were living within cities of 2,500 and larger.

The majority, or about three-fifths, of Kitsap residents are classified as rural, living in villages and towns, along highways and on farms. The rural-farm population, persons living on and operating farms, is relatively small, amounting to only 6,500 persons according to the last U.S. Census in 1950. Only 7 persons out of each 100 live on farms in this industrial county.

Table 2.- Population of Kitsap County  
1860-1955

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1860	544	100	0
1870	866	100	0
1880	1,378	100	0
1890	4,624	100	0
1900	6,767	100	0
1910	17,647	83.1	16.9
1920	33,162	73.1	26.9
1930	30,776	67.0	33.0
1940	44,387	65.9	34.1
1950	75,724	62.2	37.8
1955 <sup>1/</sup>	84,700	58.7	41.3

<sup>1/</sup> 1955 data are estimated by the Washington State Census Board.

Source: U.S. Census, Population.

There are four incorporated places in Kitsap County and each has grown markedly since 1940. The large expansion of U.S. Navy civilian employment in the Puget Sound Navy Yard is primarily responsible for the large gains registered in the last 25 years. Bremerton's population more than doubled between 1940 and 1956. Port Orchard, the county seat, and Poulsbo, a fishing, agricultural and residential area, doubled also in the same period. Winslow, a small industrial port and trade center on Bainbridge Island, was incorporated during the late 1940's and has grown rapidly in recent years.

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places  
Kitsap County, 1910-1956.

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1956 <sup>1/</sup>
Bremerton	2,993	8,918	10,170	15,134	27,678	32,200
Port Orchard	682	1,393	1,145	1,566	2,320	2,850
Poulsbo	364	546	584	639	1,014	1,430
Winslow	--	--	--	--	637	756

<sup>1/</sup> Populations for 1956 are estimates of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1956.

Sources: U.S. Census, Population.  
Washington State Census Board.

Kitsap County has been a melting pot of many foreign immigrants as well as a large number of settlers from other states of America. Before 1920 many of the settlers and workers in the lumber industry were coming from northwestern Europe. In the Census of 1920 Norwegian and Swedish immigrants amounted to over 3,000--nearly 10 percent of the county population. Canadian, English, Finnish and German people were also numerous in taking up lands on the Kitsap Peninsula. In addition to the nationalities in Table 4, the 1950 population included 1,032 American Negroes, 540 American Indians and 150 American Japanese. The Negroes are nearly all urban, being industrial and service trade workers in Bremerton and the Navy Yard. Most of the Japanese are rural farm being prominent berry, vegetable and florist growers on Bainbridge Island. The American Indians reside mainly in the reservations at Port Gamble and Port Madison.

Table 4.- Foreign-Born White Population, Kitsap County  
1890, 1920 and 1950

Country of Birth	1890	1920	1950
England and Wales.....	162	540	468
Scotland.....	54	184	124
Northern Ireland.....	--	--	2
Ireland (Eire).....	74	198	99
Norway.....	415	1,906	1,906
Sweden.....	384	1,198	640
Denmark.....	36	213	153
Netherlands.....	3	11	42
Switzerland.....	9	78	--
France.....	8	65	50
Germany.....	136	397	289
Poland.....	--	30	34
Czechoslovakia.....	--	--	29
Austria.....	19	68	106
Yugoslavia.....	--	54	27
Russia (U.S.S.R.).....	67	86	89
Finland.....	--	531	262
Italy.....	--	86	52
Canada-French.....	--	46	43
Canada-Other.....	233	759	1,098
All other countries...	148	247	271
Totals	1,749	6,837	5,074
Percent foreign-born..	37.8	20.2	6.7

Source: U.S. Census, Population.

Agriculture ranked only sixth in 1950 as a field of employment, according to the Census. Manufacturing, which includes naval shipbuilding and maintenance, led with 8,500 workers, or 37 percent of the 22,816 total employed. There were 1,155 employed or self-employed persons in agriculture. According to the Census, only 5 percent of all the employment was in agriculture. The change from less farm employment to more industrial and commercial employment, observed in Kitsap County since 1935, is a common trend in western Washington.

Table 5.- Employment of the Population  
Kitsap County, 1950

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Percent of Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	17,411	5,405	22,816	100.0
Agriculture.....	970	185	1,155	5.1
Forestry and fisheries.....	425	66	491	2.1
Mining.....	22	--	22	.1
Construction.....	1,201	18	1,219	5.3
Manufacturing 1/ .....	7,879	623	8,502	37.3
Transportation.....	735	69	804	3.5
Retail and wholesale stores.....	2,481	1,468	3,949	17.3
Miscellaneous services.....	2,157	2,401	4,558	20.0
Public administration (government employment).....	921	236	1,157	5.1
Other employment.....	620	339	959	4.2

1/ Most of the manufacturing includes U.S. Navy shipbuilding and repairing.

Source: U.S. Census, Population.